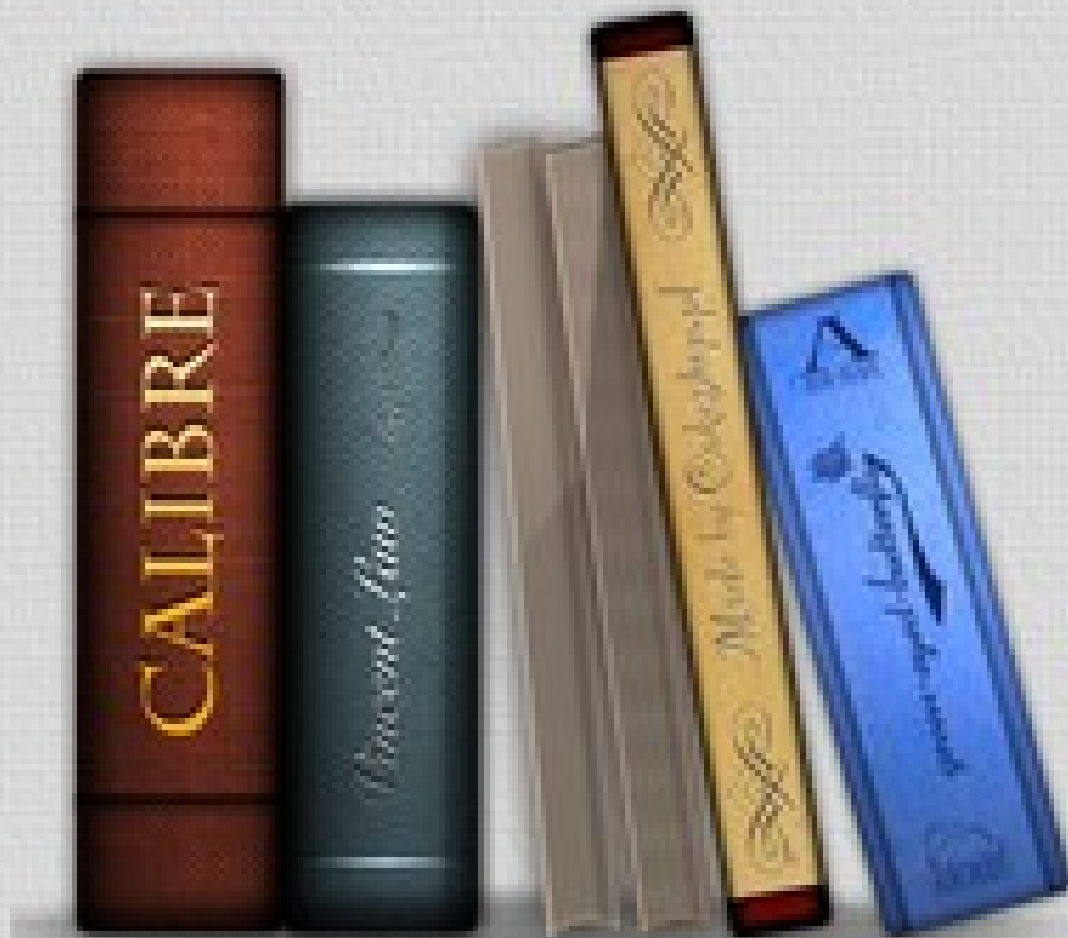


DGuzik 34 Nahum

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Book 34 of Bible Commentary:
David Guzik



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(Nah 1:1)

Introduction

The oracle against Nineveh;1

the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite:2
(Guzik)

Nah 1:1-15

NAHUM 1 - COMING JUDGMENT ON NINEVEH

A. The character of the God who brings judgment.

1. (Nah_1:1) The burden of Nahum.

The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

a. **The burden:** In the prophets, a **burden** is a “heavy” message of weighty importance, heavy in the sense that it produces sorrow or grief.

i. “*Massa* comes from the verb ‘to lift up’ (*nasa*), and so it can mean ‘to carry’ or ‘to lift up the voice.’ From the first meaning comes the translation ‘burden,’ or ‘load’; and from the second meaning we get the translation ‘oracle,’ or ‘utterance.’” (Wolf, in his commentary on Isaiah) Grammatically, we may be able to say “oracle,” but since these are *heavy* oracles, we are justified in calling them *burdens*.

ii. “*Massa* not only signifies a *burden*, but also a thing *lifted up, pronounced, or proclaimed*; also a *message*. It is used by the prophets to signify the *revelation* which they have received from God to deliver to any particular people.” (Clarke) b. **Against Nineveh:** The capital of the Assyrian Empire was Nineveh, the city that heard the preaching of Jonah a hundred years before and repented. Nahum will

address a city that has slipped back into sin, and is again ripe for judgment.

i. Among other things, the Prophecy of Nahum shows us that God not only deals with individuals as individuals, He also deals with nations as nations. “This is the prophecy which sets forth, more clearly than any other, the truth concerning the wrath of God, in its national application.” (Morgan) Nations will be held to account by God.

ii. Nineveh was an ancient, famous city. It was founded by the first world dictator, Nimrod (Gen_10:11) “From Nineveh’s walls, temples, palaces, inscriptions, and reliefs, mute yet elaborate witness is given to a city that flourished up to its destruction in 612 B.C. Accordingly, the magnificent buildings, artistic designs, and water-supply projects of Nineveh have resulted in its being likened to ancient Versailles.” (*Major Cities of the Biblical World*) c.

The book of the vision: This was more than a message communicated to Nahum in words or phrases from God.

Because this is a **vision**, in some way Nahum *saw* it. When we see the vivid, descriptive way Nahum writes we understand that **the book** records what he saw in his **vision**.

i. Isa_2:1 says: *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.* Isaiah saw a word, and in some sense Nahum also did.

d. **Nahum the Elkoshite:** We don’t know anything else about **Nahum** or the city of Elkosh. The name **Nahum** is an abbreviated form of the name *Nehemiah*, which means “Comfort of Yahweh.” It may be that Elkosh was in the region of Galilee, because the city of Capernaum (Mat_4:13, Mar_9:33, Joh_2:12) was named after **Nahum** (*Kēphar-Nahum*, “City of Nahum”).

i. We don’t know exactly when Nahum gave this prophecy. He mentions the destruction of the Egyptian city *No Amon* (Thebes) in Nah_3:8 and Thebes fell to the Assyrians in 663

B.C., so Nahum must have been written after that. Nineveh was destroyed 50 years after No Amon (612 B.C.).

ii. It is likely that Nahum was written during the *height* of Nineveh's power. "It was concerned with Nineveh, and was delivered almost certainly when she was at the height of her power." (Morgan) 2. (Nah_1:2-8) The judgments of a merciful God.

God *is* jealous, and the LORD avenges; the LORD avenges and *is* furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves *wrath* for His enemies; the LORD *is* slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*. The LORD

has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up all the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon wilts. The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence, yes, the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. The LORD *is* good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him. But with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place, and darkness will pursue His enemies.

a. **The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked:** Nahum begins his prophecy by considering the *character* of the God who brings judgment.

God is jealous: How can it be said that God is **jealous**? "God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life . . . God is

not jealous *of* us: He is jealous *for* us.” (Redpath in *Law and Liberty*) .

The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries:

Man needs to understand that he can't fight against God and hope to prevail. Everyone who sets themselves against God will end up receiving His **vengeance**.

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The LORD is slow to anger: God is far more patient than man. Though there is a time and place where He does display His **anger**, it doesn't come quickly or capriciously. “God's sword of justice is in its scabbard: not rusted in it - it can be easily withdrawn - but held there by that hand that presses it back into its sheath, crying, ‘Sleep, O sword, sleep; for I will have mercy upon sinners, and will forgive their transgressions.’” (Spurgeon) .

And great in power: Knowing God's power should make us *trust* in His help (because He is able to help) and to *fear* His judgment (knowing that He judges with **power**).

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Will not at all acquit the wicked: God is not like an unjust judge who simply lets the guilty go out of a false sense of compassion. We can't just figure that God will say, “Let's let bygones be bygones” when we get to heaven.

Sin must be accounted for, because He **will not acquit the wicked**. Every sin will be paid for - either in hell or at the cross - but God **will not acquit the wicked**. “Never once has he pardoned an unpunished sin; not in all the years of the Most High, not in all the days of his right hand, has he once blotted out sin without punishment.”

(Spurgeon)

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The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm: God's power is so great that it controls the mightiest forces known to man. A huge **whirlwind** or **storm** is nothing to God, because He **has His way** in them.

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His fury is poured out like fire: When God is resisted long enough and rejected strongly enough, eventually His judgment comes. He is **slow to anger**, but when it does come **His fury is poured out like fire**. Understanding this should make man quick to repent and wary of presuming on God's patience.

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The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble: Those who love Him and trust Him see the goodness of God, and find protection in His **stronghold** - which is the LORD Himself. "Remember that it is only a *day*; it is not a week, nor a month, and God will not permit the devil to add an extra hour to that day; it is a 'day of trouble.' There is an end to all our griefs." (Spurgeon)

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He knows those who trust in Him: Not only does He know them in the sense of identification, but also in the sense of *relationship*. **Trust** implies relationship, and God **knows those who trust in Him**. "Once more, dear friends, this word 'know' here means *loving communion* . . . God knows us; he knows our prayers and tears, he knows our wishes, he knows that we are not what we want to be, but he knows what we do desire to be. He knows our aspirations, our sighs, our groans, our secret longings, our own chastenings of spirit when we fail; he has entered into it all. He says, 'Yes, dear child, I know all about you; I have been

with you when you thought you were alone. I have read what you could not read, the secrets of your own heart that you could not decipher I have known them all, and I still know them.’” (Spurgeon) b. How important it is to know that **the LORD is good!**

- God is good in His very being - it is His very *nature* to be good
- God is good independently - no one must *help* Him be good
- God is eternally and unchangeably good
- God is good in each one of His Divine Persons
- God is good in all His acts of grace
- God is good in all His plans and purposes for our life

c. **With an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place:** Taking into account the character of God, though His **slow to anger** and **good**, He cannot forever overlook the sin and rebellion of the Assyrians. Their end in judgment will come like **an overflowing flood**.

i. The **overflowing flood** was fulfilled both figuratively and literally. “According to secular accounts, during the final siege of Nineveh by a rebel army of Persians, Medes, Arabians, and Babylonians, unusually heavy rains caused the rivers to flood and to undermine the city’s walls, which then collapsed . . . the invading armies entered the city through this breach in its defenses.” (Boice) ii. The **utter end of its place** was also literally fulfilled. “Not only were these people lost from history, even the city was lost until it was discovered by archaeologists, beginning in the 1840’s.” (Boice) iii. “The author is not expressing some personal feeling of vindication over some hurt by the oppressor, nor even a nationalistic chauvinism that pagan nations must be punished. Rather, Yahweh is applying his universal standard against evil, no matter who is responsible.” (Baker)

B. Nineveh destroyed, Judah delivered.

1. (Nah_1:9-11) The destruction of Nineveh.

What do you conspire against the LORD? He will make an utter end *of it*. Affliction will not rise up a second time. For while tangled *like* thorns, and while drunken *like* drunkards,

they shall be devoured like stubble fully dried. From you comes forth *one* who plots evil against the LORD, a wicked counselor.

a. **He will make an utter end of it:** Nineveh was ripe for a devastating judgment. This was not a harsh chastening; this was utter destruction to come upon the city. The promise “**Affliction will not rise up a second time**” sounds encouraging, until we realize that it **will not rise up a second time** because the judgment will be so severe the *first time*.

b. **They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried:** The dry leftover stalks of grass are ready to be **devoured** by the smallest flame. This is how ripe Nineveh is for judgment, and how complete the fire of judgment will be when it comes.

2. (Nah_1:12-13) The deliverance of Zion.

Thus says the LORD: “Though *they are* safe, and likewise many, yet in this manner they will be cut down when he passes through.

Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more; for now I will break off his yoke from you, and burst your bonds apart.”

a. **Though they are safe:** The enemies of Zion looked mighty; they were **safe** and **many**. Yet they will be devastated by the judgment that the LORD promised.

b. **Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more:** God’s people looked weak and **afflicted**; yet God promises that they will be strengthened and restored. The power of their oppressors will be broken (**I will break off his yoke from you**).

i. Could not the believer today, who is trapped or oppressed by sin, ask God to break the yoke of sin? It must be done with a complete willingness to *walk* in the freedom God gives, but only God can **break off** the power of the things that bind us.

3. (Nah_1:14) The end of the wicked in Assyria.

The LORD has given a command concerning you: “Your name shall be perpetuated no longer. Out of the house of your gods I will cut off the carved image and the molded image. I will dig your grave, for you are vile.”

a. **Your name shall be perpetuated no longer:** The city of Nineveh was once instantly recognized as one of the great “power cities” of the world. God promises to bring this wicked city so low that they lose their legacy and **name** among the nations.

b. **I will dig your grave, for you are vile:** In this vivid - almost extreme - imagery, God warns Nineveh of its coming judgment and destruction.

4. (Nah_1:15) Blessing in Judah.

Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you; he is utterly cut off.

a. **Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!** The contrast between the fate of the godly and wicked is nothing but *good news* to Nahum and the people of God.

i. Isa_52:7 uses a similar expression, but Isaiah marvels at the *beauty* of the *feet of him who brings good news*.

Nahum would certainly agree, because those who bring **good tidings** have beautiful feet; they partner with God for the salvation of men. The **feet** speak of activity, motion, and progress, and those who are active and moving in the work of preaching the gospel have *beautiful feet*.

ii. In Isaiah, the good news is the coming of the Messiah. In Nahum, the good news is the defeat of the enemies of God’s people. Revelation 17, 18 describe the fall of Babylon, representing the world system and all of its support structure. Rev_18:9-19 shows how the kings and merchants of the earth mourned the fall of Babylon, but Rev_18:20 through 19:6 shows how heaven rejoiced over the fall of the world system. What was mourned on earth was applauded in

heaven, and the same principle applies in Nahum's prophecy of Nineveh's fall.

iii. "Rejoicing is not in this context gleeful gloating at the misfortune of others . . . Rather it is pleasure at the vindication of God and his promises." (Baker) b. **O Judah,**

keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows: Knowing the grace and mercy of God to His people should not make the believer *careless* in obedience, it should make the believer more careful to obey every word of the LORD.

(Nah 1:2) ***God Takes Vengeance against His Enemies***

The LORD is a zealous³ and avenging⁴ God;

the LORD is avenging and very angry.⁵

The LORD takes vengeance⁶ against his foes;

he sustains his rage⁷ against his enemies.

(Nah 1:3) The LORD is slow to anger⁸ but great in power;⁹

the LORD will certainly not¹⁰ allow the wicked¹¹ to go unpunished.

The Divine Warrior Destroys His Enemies but Protects His People

He marches out¹² in the whirlwind and the raging storm;

dark storm clouds billow like dust¹³ under his feet.¹⁴

(Nah 1:4) He shouts a battle cry¹⁵ against the sea¹⁶ and makes it dry up;¹⁷

he makes all the rivers¹⁸ run dry.

Bashan and Carmel wither;¹⁹

the blossom of Lebanon withers.

(Nah 1:5) The mountains tremble before him,²⁰

the hills convulse;²¹

the earth is laid waste²² before him,

the world and all its inhabitants²³ are laid waste.²⁴

(Nah 1:6) No one can withstand²⁵ his indignation!²⁶

No one can resist²⁷ his fierce anger!²⁸

His wrath is poured out like volcanic fire,

boulders are broken up²⁹ as he approaches.³⁰

(Nah 1:7) The LORD is good³¹ —

indeed,³² he is a fortress³³ in time of distress,³⁴

and he protects³⁵ those who seek refuge³⁶ in him.

(Nah 1:8) But with an overwhelming flood³⁷

he will make a complete end of Nineveh;³⁸

he will drive³⁹ his enemies into darkness.

(Nah 1:9) ***Denunciation and Destruction of Nineveh***

Whatever⁴⁰ you plot⁴¹ against the LORD, he will completely destroy!⁴²

Distress⁴³ will not arise⁴⁴ a second time.

(Nah 1:10) Surely they will be totally consumed⁴⁵

like⁴⁶ entangled thorn bushes,⁴⁷

like the drink of drunkards,⁴⁸

like very⁴⁹ dry stubble.

(Nah 1:11) From you, O Nineveh,⁵⁰ one has marched forth
who plots evil against the LORD,
a wicked military strategist.⁵¹

(Nah 1:12) ***Oracle of Deliverance to Judah***

This is what the LORD says:⁵²

"Even though⁵³ they are powerful⁵⁴ —

and what is more,⁵⁵ even though their army is numerous⁵⁶
—

nevertheless,⁵⁷ they will be destroyed⁵⁸ and trickle
away!⁵⁹

Although I afflicted you,

I will afflict you no more.⁶⁰

(Nah 1:13) And now,⁶¹ I will break Assyria's⁶² yoke bar⁶³
from your neck;⁶⁴

I will tear apart the shackles⁶⁵ that are on you."⁶⁶

(Nah 1:14) ***Oracle of Judgment against the King of
Nineveh***

The LORD has issued a decree against you:⁶⁷

"Your dynasty will come to an end.⁶⁸

I will destroy the idols and images in the temples of your
gods.

I will desecrate⁶⁹ your grave — because you are accursed!"⁷⁰

(Nah 1:15) ***Proclamation of the Deliverance of Judah***

(2:1)⁷¹ Look! A herald is running⁷² on the mountains!

A messenger is proclaiming deliverance:⁷³

"Celebrate your sacred festivals, O Judah!

Fulfill your sacred vows to praise God!⁷⁴

For never again⁷⁵ will the wicked⁷⁶ Assyrians⁷⁷ invade⁷⁸ you,

they⁷⁹ have been completely destroyed."⁸⁰

(Nah 2:1) ***Proclamation of the Destruction of Nineveh***

(2:2) The watchmen of Nineveh shout:1

"An enemy who will scatter you² is marching out³ to attack you!"⁴

"Guard⁵ the rampart!⁶

Watch the road!

Prepare yourselves for battle!⁷

Muster your mighty strength!"⁸

(Guzik)

Nah 2:1-13

NAHUM 2 - NINEVEH CONQUERED

"This chapter is a masterpiece of ancient literature, unsurpassed for its graphic portrayal of a military assault."

(James Montgomery Boice) A. The battle of Nineveh.

1. (Nah_2:1-2) A call to battle.

He who scatters has come up before your face. Man the fort! Watch the road! Strengthen *your* flanks! Fortify *your* power mightily.

For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob like the excellence of Israel, for the emptiers have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches.

a. **He who scatters:** In his vision (Nah_1:1), now the prophet sees a mighty army coming against the city of Nineveh.

b. **For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob:** In this case, part of God's restoration for His people is connected to judgment and destruction on their enemies, those who **have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches**. They now will face destruction from **he who scatters**.

2. (Nah_2:3-7) The battle decided

The shields of his mighty men *are* made red, the valiant men *are* in scarlet. The chariots *come* with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the spears are brandished. The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning. He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their walk; they make haste to her walls, and the defense is prepared. The gates of the rivers are opened, and the palace is dissolved. It is decreed: she shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up; and her maidservants shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves, beating their breasts.

a. **The chariots come with flaming torches:** Nahum can see it all in his vision. The battle for Nineveh is fierce and bloody, and though **the defense is prepared** they will be conquered.

i. **The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning:** Chuck Smith notes that some have taken this - erroneously - as a prophecy of the automobile and traffic congestion.

b. **She shall be led away captive:** The prophet not only sees the battle, he sees the outcome - Nineveh will fall before this mighty army, and she will be humbled and **led away captive** even as the Assyrians led other nations in captivity.

B. Nineveh in defeat.

1. (Nah_2:8-12) Nineveh brought low and spoiled.

Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water, now they flee away. "Halt! Halt!" *they cry*; but no one turns back. Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold! *There is* no end of treasure, or wealth of every desirable prize. She is empty, desolate, and waste! The heart melts, and the knees shake; much pain *is* in every side, and all their faces are drained of color. Where *is* the dwelling of the lions, and the feeding place of the young lions, where the lion walked, the lioness *and* lion's cub, and no one made *them* afraid?

The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs, killed for his lionesses, filled his caves with prey, and his dens with flesh.

a. **Nineveh of old was like a pool of water:** Nahum says the troops defending Nineveh are like a pool of water that drains away to no use. They are useless in defending the city.

b. **Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold!** "An impressive confirmation of this prophecy is that nothing of all this gold and silver has been discovered in the ruins of Nineveh by archaeologists. Nineveh was indeed stripped bare." (Boice) c. **Where is the dwelling of the lions:** The **lion** was one of the national emblems of the Assyrian Empire, and they crushed and plundered other nations like lions destroying prey. Now Nahum asks, "**Where is the dwelling of the lions?**" God has brought them low, who once were so mighty.

2. (Nah_2:13) The LORD vows to conquer Nineveh.

"Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts, "I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour

your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more.”

a. **Behold, I am against you:** What a terrible thing to hear from God! The principle of Rom_8:31 is true for the believer: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Accordingly, the opposite is also true - if God is **against you**, then who can be for you?

i. **Says the LORD of hosts:** It is bad when God is against you; it is even worse when **the LORD of hosts** is against you. This title refers to God’s place as Commander in Chief over all the armies of heaven.

b. **The voice of your messengers shall be heard no more:** Nineveh enjoyed its status as a power-center of the world, and relished the fact that the **voice** of her **messengers** commanded attention in palaces all over the world. That day would come to an end under the judgment of God.

(Nah 2:2) For the LORD will restore⁹ the majesty¹⁰ of Jacob,

as well as¹¹ the majesty of Israel,

though¹² their enemies have plundered them¹³

and have destroyed their fields.¹⁴

(Nah 2:3) ***Prophetic Vision of the Fall of Nineveh***

The shields of his warriors are dyed red;¹⁵

the mighty soldiers are dressed in scarlet garments.¹⁶

The metal fittings¹⁷ of the chariots¹⁸ shine

like¹⁹ fire²⁰ on the day of battle;²¹

the soldiers brandish²² their spears.²³
(Nah 2:4) The chariots²⁴ race madly²⁵ through the streets,

they rush back and forth²⁶ in the broad plazas;

they look²⁷ like lightning bolts,²⁸

they dash here and there²⁹ like flashes of lightning.³⁰
(Nah 2:5) The commander³¹ orders³² his officers;

they stumble³³ as they advance;³⁴

they rush to the city wall³⁵

and they set up³⁶ the covered siege tower.³⁷
(Nah 2:6) The sluice gates³⁸ are opened;

the royal palace is deluged³⁹ and dissolves.⁴⁰
(Nah 2:7) Nineveh⁴¹ is taken into exile⁴² and is led
away;⁴³

her slave girls moan⁴⁴ like doves⁴⁵ while they beat⁴⁶ their
breasts.⁴⁷
(Nah 2:8) Nineveh was like a pool⁴⁸ of water⁴⁹ throughout
her days,⁵⁰

but now⁵¹ her people⁵² are running away;⁵³

she cries out:⁵⁴ "Stop! Stop!" —

but no one turns back.⁵⁵
(Nah 2:9) Her conquerors cry out:⁵⁶

"Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold!"

There is no end to the treasure;

riches of every kind of precious thing.

(Nah 2:10) Destruction, devastation, and desolation!57

Their hearts faint,58

their knees tremble,59

each stomach churns,60 each face61 turns62 pale!63

(Nah 2:11) ***Taunt against the Once-Mighty Lion***

Where now is the den of the lions,64

the feeding place65 of the young lions,

where66 the lion, lioness,67 and lion cub once prowled68

and no one disturbed them?69

(Nah 2:12) The lion tore apart as much prey as his cubs needed70

and strangled prey to provide food71 for his lionesses;

he filled72 his lairs with prey

and his dens with torn flesh.

(Nah 2:13) ***Battle Cry of the Divine Warrior***

"I am against you!" declares73 the LORD who commands armies:74

"I will burn your chariots⁷⁵ with fire;⁷⁶

the sword will devour your young lions;⁷⁷

you will no longer prey upon the land;⁷⁸

the voices of your messengers⁷⁹ will no longer be heard."

(Nah 3:1) ***Reason for Judgment: Sins of Nineveh***

Woe to the city guilty of bloodshed!1

She is full of lies;2

she is filled with plunder;3

she has hoarded her spoil!4

(Guzik)

Nah 3:1-19

NAHUM 3 - NINEVEH, THE WICKED CITY

A. The sin within Nineveh.

1. (Nah_3:1-4) The violence and immorality in Nineveh.

Woe to the bloody city! It *is* all full of lies *and* robbery. *Its* victim never departs. The noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots! Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear. *There is* a multitude of slain, a great number of bodies, countless corpses; they stumble over the corpses; because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, the mistress of sorceries, who sells nations through her harlotries, and families through her sorceries.

a. **Woe to the bloody city!** In his prophetic vision, Nahum takes a tour of the city of Nineveh and observes how ripe it is for judgment. He sees it is a busy city, full of the **noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots**. Yet it is busy with violence, deception, and idolatry.

i. Not only where the rulers of Assyria terribly cruel, they *boasted* of the cruelty on monuments that exist in museums to this day. Boice quotes some of the choice boasts from various monuments: · “I cut off their heads and formed them into pillars”

· “Bubo, son of Buba, I flayed in the city of Arbela and I spread his skin upon the city wall”

· “I flayed all the chief men who had revolted, and I covered the pillar with their skins”

· “Many within the border of my own land I flayed, and spread their skins upon the walls”

· “I cut off the limbs of the officers, the royal officers who had rebelled”

· “3,000 captives I burned with fire”

· “Their corpses I formed into pillars”

· “From son I cut off their hands and their fingers, and from other I cut off their noses, their ears, and their fingers, of many I put out their eyes”

· “I made one pillar of the living, and another of heads, I bound their heads to posts round about the city”

b. **Who sells the nations through her harlotries:** It was bad enough that Nineveh indulged in this sin for herself; it was worse that she led the **nations** into violence, deception, and idolatry. For this, the judgment of God was coming.

i. “Thousands of tablets uncovered in the Mesopotamian valley show abysmal superstition. Hundreds of sorcery incantations have been brought to light.” (Maier, cited in Boice)

2. (Nah_3:5-7) The wicked city is humbled.

“Behold, I *am* against you,” says the LORD of hosts; “I will lift your skirts over your face, I will show the nations your nakedness, and the kingdoms your shame. I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle. It shall come to pass *that* all who look upon you will flee from you, and say, ‘Nineveh is laid waste! Who will bemoan her?’ Where shall I seek comforters for you?”

a. **I am against you:** Nahum repeats this phrase, first mentioned in Nah_2:13. In the first mention, the emphasis was on the military defeat of Nineveh. Now, the emphasis is on the *humbling* of city.

i. This reminds us the principle of 1Pe_5:5 : *Be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."* Nineveh walked in pride, and as a result had the LORD **against** them. How much better to be humble and receive the grace of God!

b. **I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle:** The strength of the word of the LORD almost surprises us here. He will take the idols of Nineveh (**abominable filth**, the Hebrew word *shiqquts* often translated "abomination") and throw them back in their face.

c. **Make you vile:** The idea behind the Hebrew word for **vile** (*nabel*) is that something is made weak, foolish, and contemptible. Nineveh walked high in their pride, but will certainly be brought low - with no one to comfort them (**Where shall I seek comforters for you?**).

i. Again, this was literally fulfilled The ancient Greek historian Diodorus Siculus wrote of the destruction of Nineveh: "So great was the multitude of the slain that the flowing stream, mingled with their blood, changed its color for a considerable distance . . . They plundered the spoil of the city, a quantity beyond counting." (Boice) ii. Adam Clarke, writing before the discovery of the ruins in Nineveh in 1840, quotes an author commenting on the disappearance of the city: "What probability was there that the capital city of a great kingdom, a city which was *sixty* miles in compass, a city which contained so many *thousand* inhabitants, a city which had walls a *hundred* feet high . . . And yet so totally was it destroyed that the place is hardly known where it was situated . . . Great as it was formerly, so little of it is remaining, that authors are not agreed even about its situation."

B. Nineveh is ripe for judgment.

1. (Nah_3:8-11) Because of the way God judged other cities, Nineveh is ripe.

Are you better than No Amon *that was* situated by the River, that had the waters around her, whose rampart *was* the sea, whose wall *was* the sea? Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength, and *it was* boundless; Put and Lubim were your helpers. Yet she *was* carried away, she went into captivity; her young children also were dashed to pieces at the head of every street; they cast lots for her honorable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. You also will be drunk; you will be hidden; you also will seek refuge from the enemy.

a. **Are you better than No Amon: No Amon** is the Hebrew name for the Egyptian city of Thebes. Thebes was another wealthy, mighty city that was destroyed completely. The Assyrians in Nineveh knew this well, because it was their armies that destroyed Thebes. Nahum says, "Remember what you did to **No Amon**? The same is coming on you."

b. **You also**: We are like the Ninevites. We see empires and nations judged in our own day and in history, just like the Assyrians saw Thebes destroyed. Yet we, like the Ninevites, somehow think that we will be spared, despite our sinful arrogance and rebellion.

2. (Nah_3:12-15) Because of her own weakness, Nineveh is ripe.

All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs: If they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater. Surely, your people in your midst *are* women! The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies; fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*. Draw your water for the siege! Fortify your strongholds! Go into the clay and tread the mortar! Make strong the brick kiln! There the fire will devour you, the sword will cut you off; it will eat you up like a locust. Make yourself many; like the locust! Make yourself many; like the *swarming* locusts!

a. **Your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs:** As easily as ripe fruit falls from a shaken tree, so will the **strongholds** of Nineveh fall before the judgment of God. We often have our **strongholds** of sin and pride that we put great confidence in, but they are ready to be shaken and fall to the ground.

b. **Fire shall devour the bars of your gates:** Archaeologists document the burning of Nineveh. "The excavators of Nineveh have remarked on the large deposits of ash, which are evidence of a gigantic conflagration."

(Boice) c. **Draw your water for the siege:** Nahum practically mocks the people of Nineveh, cheering them on to do the best they can in light of the coming judgment. They can prepare as many provisions and people they please, but it will all come to nothing against the judgment of God.

3. (Nah_3:16-19) Because her leaders are weak, Nineveh is ripe.

You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven. The locust plunders and flies away. Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts, and your generals like great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges on a cold day; when the sun rises they flee away, and the place where they *are* is not known. Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; your nobles rest *in the dust*. Your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them. Your injury *has* no healing, your wound is severe. All who hear news of you will clap *their* hands over you, for upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?

a. **Merchants . . . commanders . . . generals . . . shepherds . . . nobles:** Each of these classes of leaders were numerous in Nineveh, but they all would be ineffective and come to nothing in the day of judgment. Despite their numbers, still **your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them.** The sinful and

rebellious leadership of Nineveh will be powerless against the judgment of God.

b. All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you: Nahum ends his prophecy with a view of the righteous and their triumph over the unrighteous. This is something that the people of God need to be often reminded of, because it often goes against present appearances.

i. Because Nineveh was so known - even renowned - for its violence and cruelty, no wonder Nahum sees the nations applauding when the city is judged and destroyed.

ii. In Psalms 73, Asaph dealt with this same problem. It seemed to him that the wicked constantly prospered and lived at ease. It troubled him so much that he doubted his own walk with God, *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.* (Psa_73:17-19) iii. For Nahum, Asaph, and for us today, we take comfort in knowing that the judgments of the LORD are faithful and true. We don't need to envy the unrighteous or seek vengeance against them ourselves. Nahum and Asaph each show us that God is more than able to take care of them and us, each according to His promise.

(Nah 3:2) ***Portrayal of the Destruction of Nineveh***

The chariot drivers will crack their whips;5

the chariot wheels will shake the ground;6

the chariot horses7 will gallop;8

the war chariots9 will bolt forward!10

(Nah 3:3) The charioteers11 will charge ahead;12

their swords13 will flash14

and their spears¹⁵ will glimmer!¹⁶

There will be many people slain;¹⁷

there will be piles of the dead,

and countless casualties¹⁸ —

so many that people¹⁹ will stumble over the corpses.

(Nah 3:4) ***Taunt against the Harlot City***

"Because²⁰ you have acted like a wanton prostitute²¹ —

a seductive mistress who practices sorcery,²²

who²³ enslaves²⁴ nations by her harlotry,²⁵

and entices peoples by her sorcery²⁶ —

(Nah 3:5) I am against you," declares the LORD who commands armies.²⁷

"I will strip off your clothes!²⁸

I will show your nakedness to the nations

and your shame to the kingdoms;

(Nah 3:6) I will pelt you with filth;²⁹

I will treat you with contempt;

I will make you a public spectacle.

(Nah 3:7) Everyone who sees you will turn away from you in disgust;

they will say, 'Nineveh has been devastated!

Who will lament for her?'

There will be no one to comfort you!"³⁰

(Nah 3:8) ***Nineveh Will Suffer the Same Fate as Thebes***

You are no more secure³¹ than Thebes³² —

she was located on the banks of the Nile;

the waters surrounded her,

her³³ rampart³⁴ was the sea,

the water³⁵ was her wall.

(Nah 3:9) Cush³⁶ and Egypt had limitless strength;³⁷

Put and the Libyans³⁸ were among³⁹ her⁴⁰ allies.⁴¹

(Nah 3:10) Yet she went into captivity as an exile;⁴²

even her infants were smashed to pieces⁴³ at the head of every street.

They cast lots⁴⁴ for her nobility;⁴⁵

all her dignitaries were bound with chains.
(Nah 3:11) You too will act like drunkards;⁴⁶

you will go into hiding;⁴⁷

you too will seek refuge from the enemy.
(Nah 3:12) ***The Assyrian Defenses Will Fail***

All your fortifications will be like fig trees⁴⁸ with first-ripe
fruit;⁴⁹

If they are shaken,⁵⁰ their figs⁵¹ will fall⁵² into the mouth
of the eater!⁵³

(Nah 3:13) Your warriors will be like women in your midst;

the gates of your land will be wide open⁵⁴ to your enemies;

fire will consume⁵⁵ the bars of your gates.⁵⁶
(Nah 3:14) Draw yourselves water for a siege!⁵⁷

Strengthen your fortifications!

Trample the mud⁵⁸ and tread the clay!

Make mud bricks to strengthen your walls!⁵⁹
(Nah 3:15) There the fire will consume⁶⁰ you;

the sword will cut you down;

it will devour⁶¹ you like the young locust would.

The Assyrian Defenders Will Flee

Multiply yourself⁶² like the young locust;

multiply yourself like the flying locust!

(Nah 3:16) Increase⁶³ your merchants more than the stars of heaven!

They are like⁶⁴ the young locust which sheds⁶⁵ its skin and flies away.

(Nah 3:17) Your courtiers⁶⁶ are like locusts,

your officials⁶⁷ are like a swarm of locusts!

They encamp in the walls on a cold day,

yet when the sun rises, they⁶⁸ fly away;⁶⁹

and no one knows where they⁷⁰ are.⁷¹

(Nah 3:18) ***Concluding Dirge***

Your shepherds⁷² are sleeping, O king of Assyria!

Your officers⁷³ are slumbering!⁷⁴

Your people are scattered like sheep⁷⁵ on the mountains

and there is no one to regather them!

(Nah 3:19) Your destruction is like an incurable wound;⁷⁶

your demise is like a fatal injury!⁷⁷

All who hear what has happened to you⁷⁸ will clap their hands for joy,⁷⁹

for no one ever escaped your endless cruelty!⁸⁰